

Delonis shelter fulfills purpose, many say

Center has become 1-stop 1st step for homeless

BY LISA KLIONSKY
News Staff Reporter

John Hartfield, 31, still has the photos from when he stayed in Ann Arbor before: basketball camp at the University of Michigan as a teen, housed in a dormitory.

Now he's back, but this time staying at the Robert J. Delonis Center.

A Detroit native, Hartfield didn't expect to return to Ann Arbor to live in a shelter. But after his layoff from a Ford Motor Co. plant in Wayne, a divorce and running out of money, he said he had nowhere else to turn.

"There was nothing to help me in Wayne County," he said, so he got on the waiting list for a spot at Delonis.

Hartfield moved into the center in mid-summer. He also found a job. He hopes soon to find an apartment. Like the other men and women who stay in one of the 35 beds at the center, Hartfield now wakes at 6 a.m., gets in for the night at 9:30 p.m. and eats shelter

meals.

What Hartfield found didn't exist in Ann Arbor a year ago. Shelter, food and services were offered, but in a piecemeal way at different sites. When the Delonis Center opened in November, all the services for the homeless came together under one roof. And while there have been logistical rough spots in the center's first year, center organizers said Delonis seems to be fulfilling its purpose: a one-stop center that is the first step toward ending homelessness in the county.

The 23,000-square-foot center at 312 W. Huron St., which cost \$6.7 million, offers shelter, food, medical and mental health services, legal help, job support, housing search help and other services. A \$1.5 million budget pays for shelter operations - 50 percent is from grants, including \$125,000 from Washtenaw

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A day at the Delonis Center

The downtown Ann Arbor shelter is designed to offer services that can help the homeless find and keep a home. A typical day in the center includes:

6:30-7 a.m. - Breakfast served to those who've stayed overnight

9 a.m.-5 p.m. - Michigan Works: Job search assistance

9:30-10:30 a.m. - Big Book Alcoholics Anonymous Study Group

9:30 a.m.-1 p.m. - Medical clinic

10:30 a.m.-noon - Learning coping skills women's group

Noon-1 p.m. - Lunch, open to all

1-3 p.m. - Michigan Rehabilitation Services worker

1-4 p.m. - Medical clinic

2-3 p.m. - Introduction to housing and employment services

2-3 p.m. - Alumni support group

4-5 p.m. - Voter registration

4-9 p.m. - Substance abuse assessments,



ALAN WARREN, THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

Volunteers Paula Dana of Food Gatherers and Lynn Yates of Zingerman's talk about their jobs during lunchtime at the Robert J. Delonis Center in Ann Arbor.

referrals for treatment, authorization for state and county subsidized treatment

5:30-6:30 p.m. - Dinner, open to all

6:30-8:15 p.m. - Legal consultation

8-9 p.m. - Voter registration

8:30 p.m. - Cocaine Anonymous meets

9:30 p.m. - Overnight shelter guests must be in the building